a base;

a plurality of compressible protrusions protruding in a direction away from said base and for protruding away from a wearer's foot; and

means for interconnecting said compressible protrusions, said interconnecting means ~~being adapted~~ combining with said compressible protrusions to ~~ensure~~ provide for strict compression of said compressible protrusions ~~upon acceptance of~~ in response to a compressive force, whereby a column-buckling effect is avoided.

2. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 1, wherein said compressible protrusions comprise compressible material and present varying thicknesses ~~of compressible material~~, wherein:

said protrusions comprise a first set of protrusions and a second set of protrusions;

said first set of protrusions present at least one thickness ~~corresponds~~ corresponding to a first stage of compression ~~upon acceptance of~~ in response to a compressive force and;

said second set of protrusions present at least one thickness ~~corresponds~~ corresponding to a second stage of compression ~~upon acceptance of~~ in response to a compressive

force, the second stage of compression initiating ~~upon completion~~ subsequent to initiation of the first stage of compression.

3. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 2, wherein the first stage of compression corresponds to a first spring force and the second stage of compression corresponds to a second spring force, the second spring force including the first spring force and an augmenting spring force.

4. **(Currently Amended)** The insole according to Claim 3, wherein at least one thickness associated with said insole corresponds to a third stage of compression ~~upon acceptance of~~ in response to a compressive force, the third stage of compression initiating ~~upon completion~~ subsequent to initiation of the second stage of compression.

5. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 4, wherein the third stage of compression corresponds to a third compressive force, the third spring force including the second spring force and a second augmenting spring force.

6. **(Currently Amended)** The insole according to Claim 5, wherein:

~~said protrusions comprise a first set of protrusions and a second set of protrusions;~~

said interconnecting means comprises ~~a~~ said base;

~~said first set of protrusions have the at least one thickness corresponding to the first stage of compression;~~

~~said second set of protrusions have the at least one thickness corresponding to the second stage of compression;~~ and

said base has the at least one thickness corresponding to the third stage of compression.

7. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 6, wherein said insole comprises a forward impact region and a rearward impact region, each of said forward and rearward impact regions including a plurality of said protrusions, the plurality of protrusions in said rearward impact region presenting generally greater thicknesses than corresponding protrusions in said forward impact region.

8. **(Cancelled)**

9. **(Cancelled)**

10. **(Cancelled)**

11. **(Cancelled)**

12. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 1, wherein:

a first group of said protrusions is adapted to maximally absorb a compressive force along a first primary force vector; and

a second group of said protrusions is adapted to maximally absorb a compressive force along a second primary force vector.

13. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 12, wherein a third group of said protrusions is adapted to maximally absorb a compressive force along a third primary force vector.

14. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 13, wherein:

the first primary force vector is essentially parallel to a longitudinal axis of said insole;

the second primary force vector is oriented at an acute angle, and in a leftward and forward direction, with respect to the first primary force vector; and

the third primary force vector is oriented at an acute angle, and in a rightward and forward direction, with respect to the first primary force vector.

15. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 14, wherein the second primary force vector is oriented at an angle of between about 30 degrees and about 45 degrees, and in a

leftward and forward direction, with respect to the first primary force vector.

16. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 14, wherein the third primary force vector is oriented at an angle of between about 30 degrees and about 45 degrees, and in a rightward and forward direction, with respect to the first primary force vector.

17. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 13, wherein:

said insole comprises a forward impact region and a rearward impact region; and

said forward impact region comprises a plurality of said first group of protrusions, a plurality of said second group of protrusions and a plurality of said third group of protrusions.

18. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 1, wherein said insole is formed from a gel material.

19. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 18, wherein said gel material is styrene-based.

20. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 18, wherein said gel material is polyurethane-based.

21. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 18, wherein said gel material has a durometer measurement of between about 40 Shore OO and about 65 Shore OO.

22. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 21, wherein said gel material has a durometer measurement of about 55 Shore OO.

23. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 1, wherein said protrusions are formed from different materials with different durometer measurements.

24. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 1, further comprising an arch stiffener.

25. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 24, wherein a remainder of said insole is formed from at least one material that is less stiff than said arch stiffener.

26. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 1, wherein said insole is an element that is freely incorporable into footwear and freely removable therefrom.

27. **(Original)** The insole according to Claim 1, wherein said insole is sized to accommodate solely the heel area of a foot.